

Message Text

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S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 SANA 3280

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, YE
SUBJ: POLICY AND APPOINTMENTS IN NEW YARG

SUMMARY: PREDICTABLE MANUEVERING FOR JOBS AND INFLUENCE HAS
BEGUN AROUND NEW GOVERNMENT. DESPITE CLAIMS BY "OPPOSITION"
OF AMBIVALENCE ABOUT NEW ANTI-SOUTH AND ANTI-SOVIET POLICY
WHICH ASNAJ, APPARENTLY, IS LAYING DOWN IN ARAB LEAGUE, WE
THINK DANGER IS STILL THAT YAR MIGHT JOIN OTHERS IN ATTACK
ON SOUTH. END SUMMARY.

1. IT IS INEVITABLE, IN VIEW OF MOST OBSERVERS IN SANA, THAT
MODIFICATIONS WILL HAVE TO TAKE PLACE IN GOVERNMENT WHICH
FORMED IN SPACE OF AFTERNOON UNDER STRESS OF ASSASSINATION
OF CHIEF OF STATE GHASHMI. REASONS ARE NOT HARD TO FIND.
CONSULTATIONS FOR NEW GOVERNMENT EXCLUDED MANY OF YEMEN'S
TRADITIONAL BROKERS OF POWER, PERHAPS NOT SO MUCH IN INTENT
AS BY FACT THEY NOT IN SANA, COULDN'T GET THERE IN TIME.
MORE IMPORTANT, POWER OF SOME PERSONS NOW WITHOUT POSTS
IS GREATER THAN POWER OF OTHER PERSONS NOW IN POSTS.

2. ON LEFT WING OF ESTABLISHMENT WHICH HAS SHAPED YEMENI
POLITICS FOR DECADE, SINAN ABU LUHUM IS CALLING FOR
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RETURN OF MUHSIN AL-AYNI. THIS GROUP IS ANATHEMA TO
SAUDIS. ON RIGHT WING, ABDALLAH BIN HUSAYN AL-AHMAR IS
SEEKING MORE RECOGNITION, LARGER ROLE FOR TRIBES, AND
JOB FOR HIS TWO-FISTED BROTHER-IN-LAW, MOUJAHID ABU
SHUWARIB. YAHYA MUTAWAKKIL -- WHO SWEARS HE IS LEAVING
FOR WASHINGTON 2 JULY -- IS VERY ATTRACTIVE CANDIDATE
TO MANY YEMENIS ON LEFT AND RIGHT.

3. TRYING TO BRIDGE THE GAP IS PRESENT GOVERNMENT, STRETCHING FROM MODERNIZER ABD AL-AZIZ ABD AL-GHANI THROUGH SOVIET-TRAINED CINC SHAYBA TO TRIBESMAN ALI ABDALLAH SALEH AND QADI AL-ARASHI.

4. ANOTHER VERY IMPORTANT PART OF GOVERNMENT IS ABDALLAH AL-ASNAJ, WHO IS PRESENTLY RUNNING AWAY WITH YEMENI FOREIGN POLICY IN ARAB LEAGUE, CALLING FOR AREA-WIDE COMMITMENT TO OPPOSE ARAB RADICAL AND SOVIET AMBITIONS COMING FROM ADEN. HIS CALL FOR EXPULSION OF ADEN FROM LEAGUE, FOR ECONOMIC BOYCOTT, FOR CONDEMNATION OF TERRORIST PLOT BY "PRESENT RULERS IN PDRY," FOR THEIR DEPENDENCE OF FOREIGN TROOPS AND COOPERATION WITH PLOTS OF SUPERPOWERS IN THE HORN. THIS IS MUSIC IN EARS OF SAUDIS, OF COURSE.

5. ACCORDING YAHYA MUTAWAKKIL, WHOLE ASNAJ PERFORMANCE IS FRAUD. MUTAWAKKIL, COMING TO SEE CHARGE ON 2 JULY AFTER MEETING WITH ABDALLAH BIN HUSAYN AL-AHMAR, SAYS ASNAJ IS REALLY USING ARAB LEAGUE FORUM FOR EFFORT WHICH HE KNOWS IN ADVANCE WILL FAIL. POSITION IS CHOSEN TO STRENGTHEN HAND OF ALI ABDALLAH SALIH AGAINST RIVALS LIKE ABDALLAH BIN HUSAYN AND MOUJAHID. MUTAWAKKIL SAYS -- VERY CONFIDENTIALLY -- THAT HE IS GOING TO RIYADH ON 3 JULY TO SEE SULTAN TO PRESENT "OPPOSITION VIEW."

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6. LATTER PRESUMABLY FROM AL AHMAR, IS THAT PARLIAMENT HERE MUST BE EXPANDED TO 150 PERSONS, WITH ELECTIONS WITHIN SIXTY DAYS FOR PRESIDENT AND TWO VICE PRESIDENTS. BUDGET POWERS MUST BE TAKEN AWAY FROM CHIEF OF STAFF AND GIVEN TO MINISTER OF DEFENSE, WHO MIGHT BE MUTAWAKKIL HIMSELF, HUSAYN AL-MASWARI OR MOUJAHID. PRESIDENT WOULD BE ARASHI, "A QADI WHO LOVES HIMSELF" AND VICE PRESIDENTS MIGHT INCLUDE ABDAL AZIZ, WHO IS "GOOD FACE" BUT TOO WEAK TO BE PRIME MINISTER. AL-AHMAR WOULD BE OTHER VICE PRESIDENT. ACCORDING TO MUTAWAKKIL, THIS WOULD BE RETURN FROM ONE-MAN RULE OF HAMDI AND GHASHMI TO "COLLEGIATE LEADERSHIP" BUT LUHUMIS COULD BE EXCLUDED FROM POWER BUT ASNAJ WOULD ALSO HAVE TO GO ALONG WITH RUSSIANS. IN MEANTIME, ACCORDING MUTAWAKKIL, HE IS LEAVING YEMEN ENROUTE TO WASHINGTON IN RESPONSE SPECIFIC REQUEST BY ALI ABDALLAH SALIH. HE HAS, OF COURSE, NOT MENTIONED INVITATION HE HAS FROM SULTAN TO VISIT RIYADH.

7. THERE IS LITTLE REASON TO DOUBT THAT OPPOSITION TO GOVERNMENT IN WHICH ASNAJ AND SALIH ARE INCREASINGLY DOMINANT WOULD COME FROM STRONG TRIBALISTS LIKE AL-AHMAR.

MUTAWAKKIL HAS NO DOUBT REPORTED ACCURATELY BOTH FORM AND FACT OF OPPOSITION TO GOVERNMENT. IT'S INTERESTING TO NOTE ALSO THAT SOUTHERNERS LIKE ABD AL-KARIM AL-IRYANI AND AHMED ABDO SAID ARE DELIGHTED AT THOUGHT THAT ALI ABDALLAH SALIH MIGHT EXCLUDE NORTHERNERS AND ZAYDIS LIKE MUTAWAKKIL AND AL-AHMAR. SO IS ASNAJ. THEY HAVE ALL SAID AS MUCH TO CHARGE AND OTHERS. HERE AS IN SO MUCH IN PAST SECTARIAN ELEMENT IS DECISIVE, WITH WEAKER SOUTHERNERS RECRUITING AMBITIOUS NORTHERNERS LIKE HAMDI AND SALIH TO FRONT FOR THEM IN DEALING WITH TRIBES.

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8. POINT ON WHICH WE ARE FOCUSING, HOWEVER, IS CHARGE BY MUTAWAKKIL THAT NEW YARG IS SIMPLY FOLLOWING OLD POLICY OF KEEPING LINES OUT TO SOVIETS. MUTAWAKKIL POINTS OUT THAT EVEN GHASHMI -- NOT ONLY HAMDI -- WORKED WITH SOVIETS AND LATTER -- IN HIS LAST DAYS -- CAME TO NEW AGREEMENT FOR DELIVERY 25 T-55 TANKS AND TRACKED ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUNS. (EQUIPMENT WAS DELIVERED IMMEDIATELY AND HAS BEEN SPOTTED IN SANA AND HODEIDA.) WE THINK THAT GHASHMI DID THIS ONLY AS COVER OR DECEPTION FOR COUP HE WAS PLOTTING WITH SALEM BUT MUTAWAKKIL SAYS SOUTHERNERS LIKE ASNAJ ARE SIMPLY TRYING TO KEEP THEIR POSITION AND MAINTAIN SOVIET POSITION TO MAXIMIZE LEVERAGE IN FUTURE.

9. IT IS TRUE THAT ARASHI, WITH TWINAM AND IN PUBLIC STATEMENTS, CAREFULLY AVOIDED CONDEMNATION OF SOVIETS AND SPECIFICALLY SAID YEMENI POLICY WAS SAME AS IN PAST; THEY WOULD DEAL WITH ALL SIDES WHICH APPROACHED THEM DIRECTLY AND OPENLY. ARASHI THEN SUPPRESSED TWIN PRESS CONFERENCE AND, MIRABILE DICTU, ASNAJ PRESS CONFERENCE, APPARENTLY

TO AVOID ANY APPEARANCE OF A TILT AGAINST EAST. ALI ABDALLAH SALIH MADE POLICY CLEAR TO DATT ON JULY 2 WHEN HE REPEATED OLD LINE THAT WHEN SAUDI AND AMERICAN HELP ARRIVES IN AMOUNTS HE THINKS NECESSARY, HE WILL SEND SOVIETS PACKING.

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10. DESPITE THESE DISCREPANCIES -- WHICH MAY BE EXPLAINED BY LACK OF ANY CONCRETE U.S. OR SAUDI RESPONSE TO YEMENI MILITARY NEEDS -- WE FIND MUTAWAKKIL STORY NOT RPT NOT CONVINCING. ASNAJ IS WAY OUT ON LIMB IN ARAB LEAGUE. (HE HAS, IN FACT, PUT HIS LIFE IN SERIOUS DANGER FROM PDRY TERRORISTS.) SALIH IS ON TV DAILY HERE WITH HIS HOARSE, LISPING, FIERCE VOICE PROMISING REVENGE AGAINST SOUTH, WHICH HE CALLS "LAND OF BLOOD SUCKERS."

11. COMMENT: OUR GUESS IS THAT SAUDIS VERY PLEASED WITH PRESENT GOVERNMENT AND, WHILE IT MAY ACCOMMODATE OPENING TO RIGHT (ABDALLAH BIN HUSAYN IN PARLIAMENT JOB) THEY ARE NOT LIKELY TO LOOK FAVORABLY ON AMBITIONS OF MUTAWAKKIL AND MOUJAHID, MUCH LESS LUHUMIS. WE CONTINUE BE CONCERNED THAT GREATER DANGER THAN PRESSURE ON GOVERNMENT -- EVERYONE ACKNOWLEDGES THAT INTERNAL SPLITS HERE NOW ARE GRAVE RISK AFTER RUTHLESS DISPLAY OF POWER IN ADEN -- IS TEMPTATION PURSUE ASNAJ-SALIH THRUST THROUGH TO LOGICAL CONCLUSION OF ATTACK OF SOME SORT ON SOUTH YEMEN.

12. FOR THE RECORD, I AM TELLING EVERYONE THAT GREAT WEAPON OF SOUTHERNERS IS NOT CUBANS BUT INTERNAL RIVALRIES HERE. I ALSO STRONGLY DISAVOW ANY USG COMMITMENT OF ANY SORT TO ANY INDIVIDUAL OR FACTIONS, INSISTING OUR CONCERN IS INSTEAD WITH STABILITY. I ALSO REPEAT AND REPEAT TO ALL I SEE BOTH PRECAUTIONARY MEASURE AND PROMISE OF USG SUPPORT IN STATE 166279. ARASHI AND SLIH BOTH HAVE THE MESSAGE; ON 3 JULY I WILL DELIVER IT TO ABDALLAH BIN HUSAYN. ONE POINT WHICH I ALSO REPEAT TAKES ME CLOSER TO DOMESTIC YEMENI POLITICS; I AM SAYING RUSSIAN MILITARY MISSION SHOULD GO. SPECIFICALLY, I SAY THAT AS PRACTICAL MATTER, U.S. AND SAUDI HELP IN MILITARY PROGRAM IS IMPOS-

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SIBLE IF SOVIETS HERE TO OBSTRUCT, SPREAD RUMORS, OFFER HYPOCRITICAL COMPETITION. I HAVE SAID ALSO THAT NEW SAUDI AND U.S. COMMITMENT TO HELP YAR FACE THREAT FROM SOVIET-BACKED SOUTH BECOMES CONCEPTUAL NONSENSE IF YAR TRIES TO PLAY BOTH SIDES AGAINST MIDDLE. I AM MAKING

POINT IN LOW KEY, BASED ON LONG-STANDING INSTRUCTIONS
BUT WISH MAKE POINT MATTER OF RECORD.
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